



REGIONAL WATER STUDY PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference shall not contradict the current policies or procedures of Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) or any grant award contract between the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and OCPC.

Background

In 2023, OCPC was awarded a \$940,000 investment from the EDA for a regional water study. This application was made possible through an Environmental Protection Agency grant subaward that OCPC received from the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program. The project is being funded under EDA's FY 2020 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Notice of Funding Opportunity (FY20 PWEAA NOFO). Matching funds were provided by our partners, the Central Plymouth County Water District Commission (\$225,000), the Commonwealth (\$200,000), and the South Shore Chamber of Commerce/South Shore Economic Development Corporation (\$45,000).

The formal name of this project is *Economic Resilience and Sustainable Water Supply in the Old Colony Economic Development District*, or *OCPC Regional Water Study* for short. The project area is the region serviced by OCPC, which is also an EDA-designated Economic Development District: Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Easton, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Kingston, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman.

The Project Steering Committee will support this project through collaboration across the region and co-designing the project as it develops to ensure the needs of the region are met.

Purpose and Powers of the Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee's primary purpose is to contribute to the development of a Regional Water Study for the region serviced by OCPC. Steering Committee members will facilitate the sharing of project related knowledge, reports and data with CDM Smith in a timely fashion. Steering Committee members role will be to represent their own organization, as well as other partner organizations with shared interests. They will make every effort to attend the monthly Steering Committee meetings and workshops in person. CDM Smith will work with OCPC to prepare adaptive short-term and long-term portfolios of supply options based on Steering Committee workshop outcomes. Steering Committee members will support in the decision-making process for development of these short-term and long-term project portfolios for inclusion in the Regional Water Plan. Steering Committee members role in decision making will be to make recommendations, but not funding or policy decisions at this time. Every effort will be made to reach consensus in decision-making; when this is not possible, final documentation will summarize all opinions, with attribution if requested. Steering Committee members will respect the interests and perspectives of all other participants. Steering Committee members will coordinate with stakeholders to provide feedback on deliverables for the Regional Water Plan in a timely fashion.

Steering Committee members that are representing multiple communities or groups will meet regularly with their communities to share progress and facilitate the sharing of project- related knowledge and information with CDM Smith and OCPC.

Project Overview

This project will strengthen the region’s competitive economic resilience and produce a sustainable water resources supply plan for the long-term development of the region. Tasks to be completed include the following:

1. Project management and grant administration – OCPC will manage the consultant(s), ensure grant requirements are met, and facilitate stakeholder communication across the region
2. Steering Committee – OCPC will form a Project Steering Committee with CDM Smith.
3. CDM Smith will be expected to do the following:
 - a. Facilitate the Project Steering Committee
 - b. Engage stakeholders and the public across the region
 - c. Compile into a library and review all relevant local, regional, state, and federal reports and other materials relevant to the project
 - d. Establish a baseline of water use at the municipal and regional levels, making that information available online
 - e. Review or establish projections for future (25-years plus) water use at the municipal and regional levels, making clear how much demand is expected to be residential versus other uses, making that information available online
 - f. Analyze future water supply demand gaps and recommend solutions for addressing those gaps; solutions explored will include traditional infrastructure supply side options, innovative options such as decentralized systems and water reuse, and demand side measures such as water conservation.
 - g. Solutions shall be examined for their economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits
 - h. Examine how the most beneficial solutions will lead toward plentiful, affordable, and ecologically sustainable waters supplies for the region
 - i. Produce a final report with implementation plan

The outcomes of this project are expected to be the following:

1. A standing Water Resources Committee that continues to collaborate and advise on issues within OCPC’s region
2. An implementable plan for economically resilient and ecologically sustainable water supply in the region
3. Priority projects ready for further development and financing
4. Online hub of resources including data sets, maps, and good practices.

Project Steering Committee Process and Meetings

To move this important regional project along expeditiously and ensure grant deadlines are met, it is crucial to have an RFP Advisory Group structure that is manageable and that ensures key informants and stakeholders in the region have opportunity to participate. To that end, the following process has been developed: